

THE BRAVE AND THE DAMNED

4 ALL-ACTION ISSUES EVERY MONTH

★ No. 77 **BOMB-RUN**

It took split-second timing—and courage beyond the call of duty

★ No. 78 **A TRUCE WITH DEATH**

They were strange allies—banded together in a fight for survival

★ No. 79 **UNKNOWN HERO**

He made a lone stand—against authority—and the brutal enemy

★ No. 80 **FLAME OF ANGER**

Vengeance drove him on—made him a killer !

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THE BRAVE AND THE DAMNED

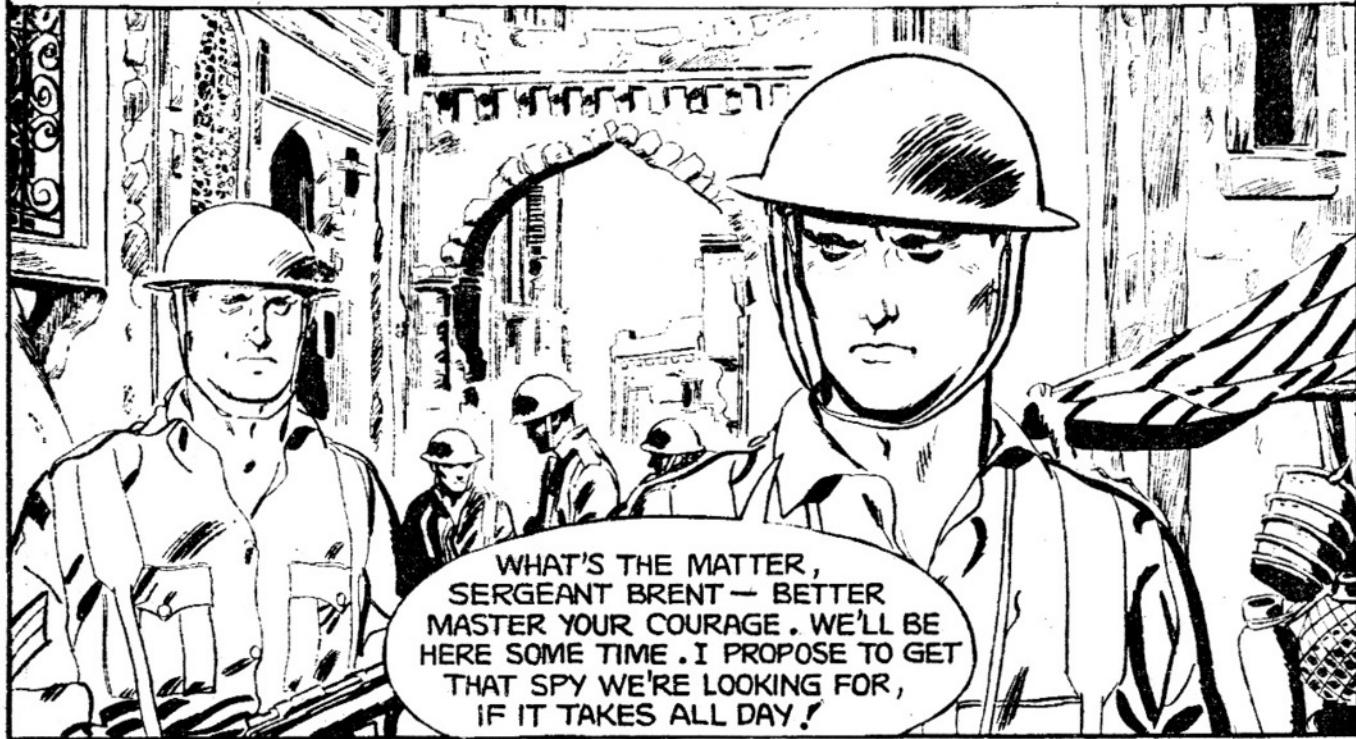
THE WHITE-HOT FORGE OF WAR TRANSFORMS
SOME MEN TO TEMPERED STEEL. SOME IT
BREAKS. BUT A HANDFUL OF MEN SEEM TO
BE MARKED BY THE DEVIL HIMSELF TO SERVE
HIM IN THE SLAUGHTER OF BATTLE. SUCH
A MAN CAME WITH THE 8th ARMY TO
TUNISIA IN JANUARY 1943.



THE DEVILRY BEGAN THAT MONTH WHEN A COLUMN
OF BRITISH TROOPS CAME FROM THE DESERT TO TAKE
EL AMOREZ, A KEY-TOWN OF TUNISIA, HOT-BED
OF SPIES AND FURTIVE HATE.

Chapter 1. Prophecy in Blood

LIEUTENANT SIMON SNAITH'S BROODING EYES GLITTERED AS HIS SERGEANT HALTED THEIR PATROL ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE ARAB QUARTER OF EL AMOREZ. SNAITH KNEW THE SERGEANT HATED HIM ...



BRENT, A VETERAN DESERT FIGHTER, SWALLOWED HIS DISLIKE OF THE SNEERING NEW PLATOON COMMANDER. GRIMLY, HE ORDERED THE PLATOON TO FALL IN.



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SNAITH POINTED TOWARDS A LOW-BUILT HOUSE . . .

MAKE SURE NO ONE LEAVES THAT PLACE, SERGEANT. IT'S THE HOUSE OF HASSAN ED-DHIN, A FORTUNE-TELLER. I SUSPECT HIM OF BEING THE SPY WE ARE LOOKING FOR.



THE SERGEANT PLACED HIS MEN ROUND THE HOUSE, AS SNAITH MADE HIS WAY INTO THE VILLA . . .

YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT SNAITH HAS NERVE — WALKING INTO A NEST OF SPIES SINGLE-HANDED.

HASSAN IS JUST A CRANKY CRYSTAL-GAZER. H.Q. VETTED HIM YESTERDAY AND FOUND HE WAS NO SPY.

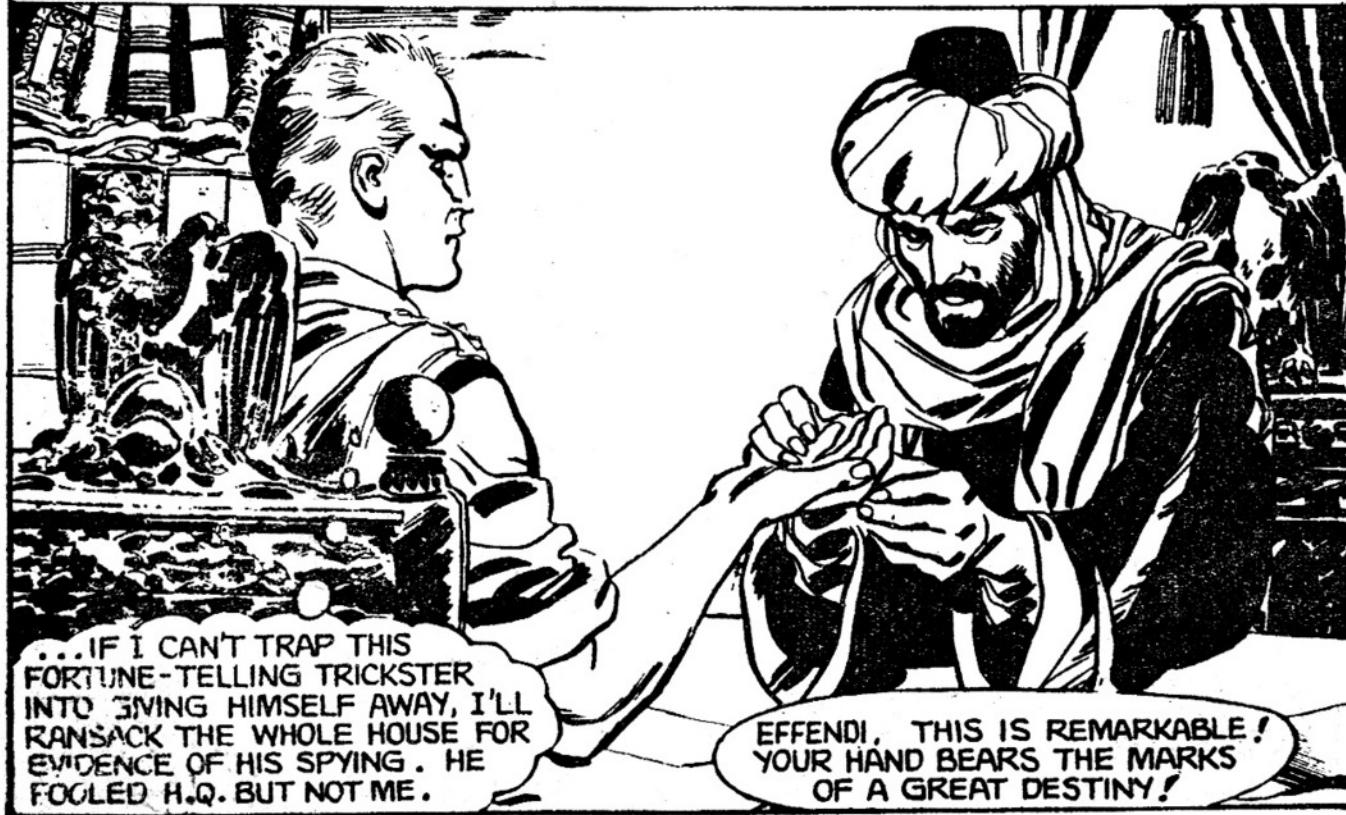


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HASSAN ED-DHIN, PHILOSOPHER, MYSTIC AND ASTROLOGER, WELCOMED SNAITH IN THE HOSPITABLE ARAB FASHION.



HASSAN LED THE WAY TO AN INNER ROOM, AND SNAITH'S SENSES, ALERT FOR ANY DANGER, COULD DETECT THE PRESENCE OF NO ONE ELSE IN THE VILLA. CYNICALLY, HE LET HASSAN INSPECT HIS PALM.



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SNAITH'S PEBBLY EYES NARROWED.
HE HAD NO FAITH IN HASSAN'S
POWERS TO FORETELL THE FUTURE.

TELL YOUR
MYSTERIES,
PROPHET. LET
US SEE HOW
MUCH YOU CAN
DIVINE.



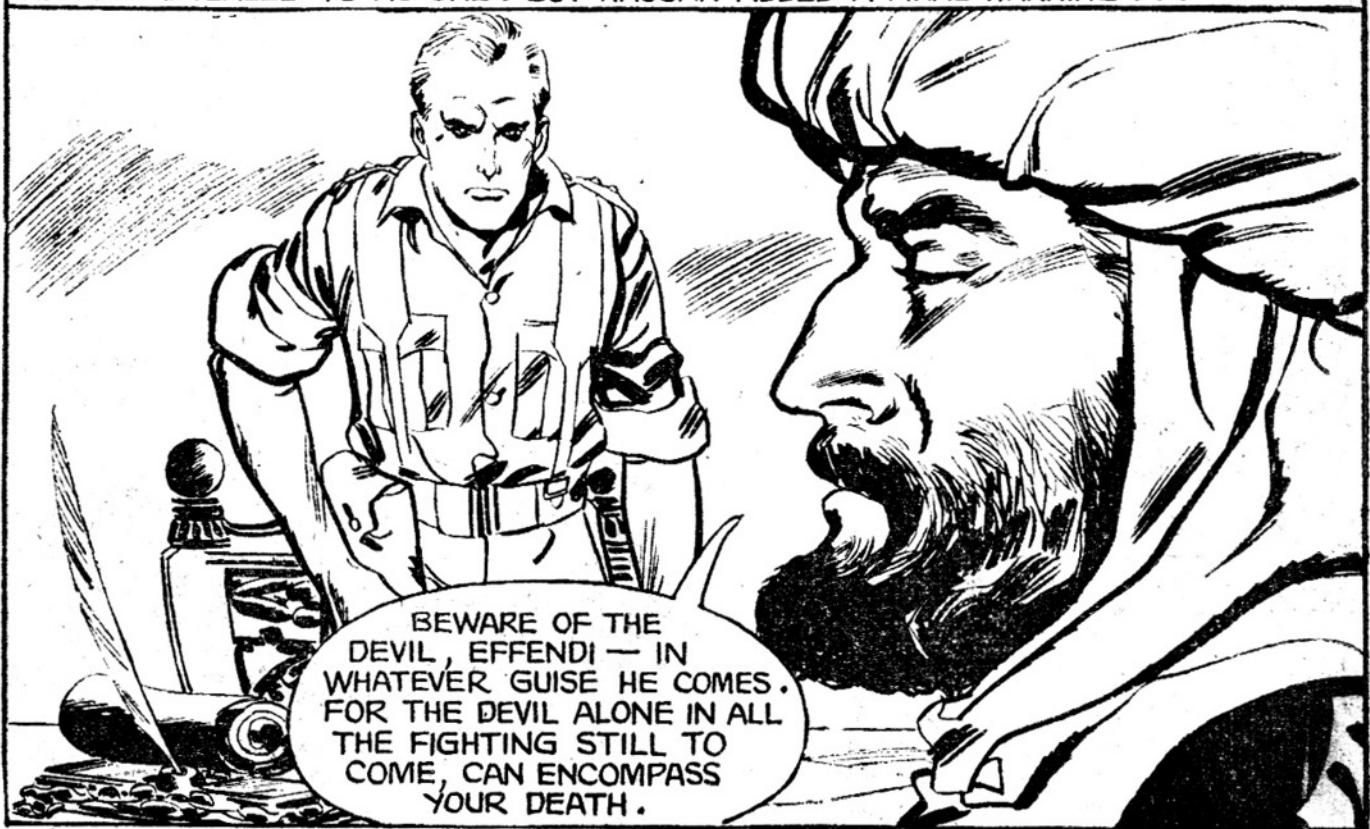
YOU WILL
LIVE THROUGH
THIS WAR OF THE
NATIONS TO BE A
GREAT LEADER
— ALL ABOUT YOU
MEN WILL DIE, BUT
YOU WILL SURVIVE ...

... THIS STAR IS THE MARK
OF THE KILLER. MEN WILL SAY IT IS
TO THE DEVIL HIMSELF YOU OWE THE
GENERAL'S BATON WHICH WILL COME
TO YOU IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME...



SNAITH SCOWLED. CLEARLY THE ARAB HAD GUESSED THE DRIVING AMBITIONS WHICH
HE HAD REVEALED TO NO-ONE. BUT HASSAN ADDED A FINAL WARNING ...

BEWARE OF THE
DEVIL, EFFENDI — IN
WHATEVER GUISE HE COMES.
FOR THE DEVIL ALONE IN ALL
THE FIGHTING STILL TO
COME, CAN ENCOMPASS
YOUR DEATH.



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THIS WAS TOO MUCH. SNAITH'S HAND WENT TO HIS HOLSTER, AND THE ARAB SAW WITH SWIFT FEAR THE MENACE IN SNAITH'S EYES.

YOU DON'T TRICK ME, HASSAN. YOU'RE A CHARLATAN, PASSING INFORMATION TO THE GERMANS.

IT IS NOT TRUE, EFFENDI — I AM NO SPY!

DRIVING HASSAN BEFORE HIM FROM ROOM TO ROOM, SNAITH SEARCHED FOR INCRIMINATING DOCUMENTS — A HIDDEN RADIO, OR ANY POSSIBLE SIGN OF TREACHERY.

MAYBE IT WILL COMFORT YOU WHEN YOU ARE EXECUTED, HASSAN, TO THINK THAT YOUR DEATH WILL LEAD TO MY PROMOTION — THE FIRST STEP IN THE CAREER YOU FORETELL FOR ME.

PLEASE, EFFENDI — I AM A FRIEND OF THE BRITISH!

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SNAITH DID EVERYTHING BUT RIP THE VILLA APART IN HIS SEARCH, AND GRADUALLY IT CAME TO HIM THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE. HIS FURY RETURNED.



THEN HE REMEMBERED THAT ONE OR TWO OF THESE CODE-SHEETS — UNNECESSARY EXTRA EVIDENCE IN YESTERDAY'S CASE — WERE STILL IN HIS POCKET.



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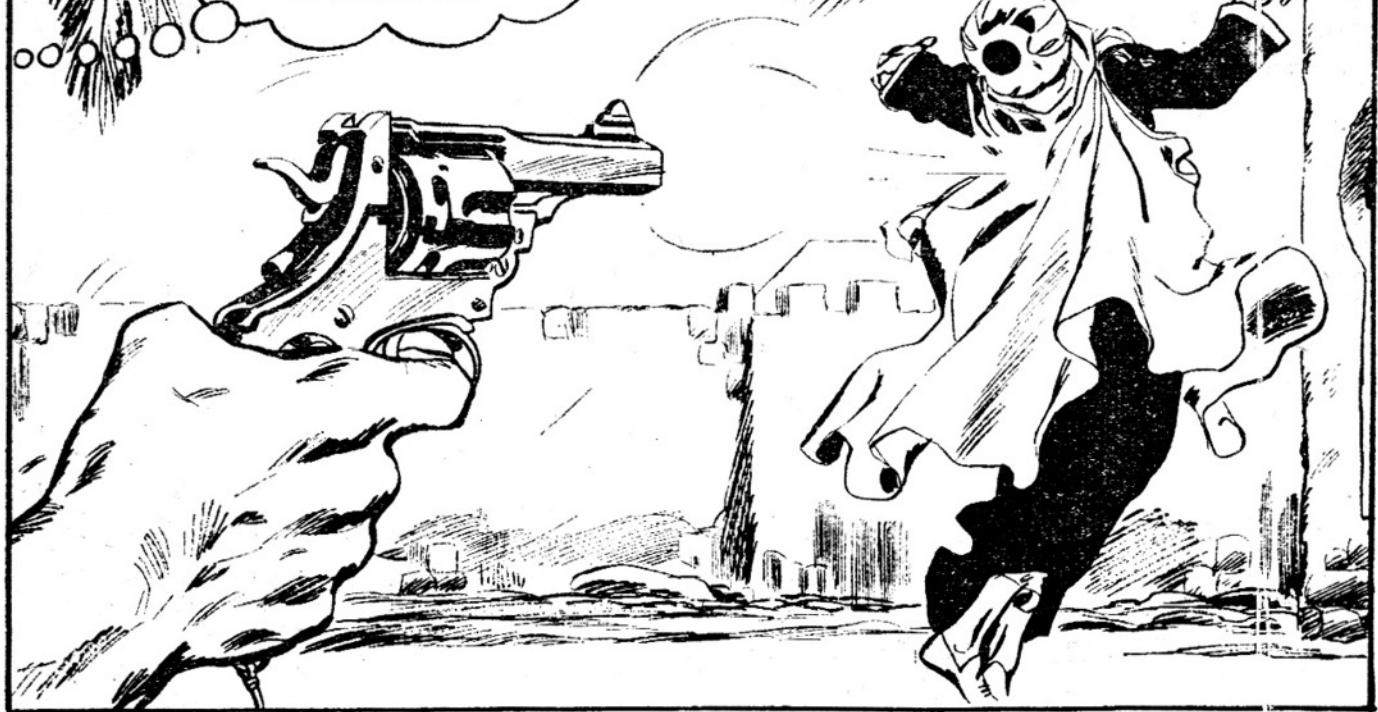
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COOLLY, SNAITH CUT HIM OFF, CORNERED HIM AND TOOK CAREFUL AIM.

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
NO INTERROGATIONS,
JUST A CASE OF 'SHOT
WHILST ATTEMPTING
TO ESCAPE !

AAAGH!



AT THE SOUND OF THE SHOT, SERGEANT BRENT AND TWO OF THE PLATOON HURRIED INTO THE COURTYARD.

LEAVE THE BODY WHERE IT IS, SERGEANT.
PUT A GUARD ON THE HOUSE, AND SEND
FOR THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER —
HE'LL FIND PROOF HASSAN
WAS PASSING INFORMATION
TO THE GERMANS.



The Brave And The Damned

AS SNAITH EXPECTED, WHEN HE PUT IN HIS REPORT — THE THIRD SUCCESS HE HAD HAD THAT WEEK — THE C.O. SENT FOR HIM.

I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR RESOURCE, SNAITH. I'M RECOMMENDING YOU FOR THAT VACANT CAPTAINCY.



BUT AS SNAITH LEFT THE C.O.'S BILLET, HIS SELF-SATISFACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN JARRED IF HE COULD HAVE READ THE COLONEL'S THOUGHTS.



EXULTING OVER HIS FORTHCOMING PROMOTION, SNAITH MADE FOR THE OFFICERS' MESS. OTHERS THERE HAD TRIED TO TRAP HASSAN, THE FORTUNE-TELLER — BUT THEY HAD FAILED ...



The Brave and The Damned

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OF ALL THE OFFICERS IN THE SOUTH ANGLIAN REGIMENT, OF WHICH SNAITH WAS THE NEWEST MEMBER, CAPTAIN HALL WAS THE ONE HE MOST DETESTED — A LEADER WITH ALL THE QUALITIES SNAITH HIMSELF LACKED.



HASSAN FORETOLD
I WOULD DIE BY AN UNSEEN HAND AT
SUNSET — AND BEGGED ME TO STAY
IN CAMP TONIGHT.

SNAITH SMILED AS HE REMEMBERED THE DESTINY HASSAN HAD FORETOLD FOR HIM . . . HASSAN TOLD ME I'D LIVE TO BE A GENERAL. I SUPPOSE YOU'LL STAY IN TONIGHT AND PLAY SAFE?



NO, I'M OFF
ON PATROL —
I DON'T BELIEVE
IN THESE FAKES.

SNAITH WOKE EARLY NEXT MORNING, AS HE HEARD THE HEAVY FOOTSTEPS OF THE RETURNING PATROL. FOR AN INSTANT, HE WONDERED IF HALL HAD RETURNED, OR IF . . .



IT'S ME - HALL!
STILL ALIVE. HASSAN
SLIPPED UP IN HIS
PREDICTION . . .

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BUT AS SIMON SNAITH WENT TO HIS QUARTERS ONE EVENING A WEEK LATER, HE CAME ACROSS A STRETCHER PARTY . . .

WE WERE ON PATROL AND THE SUN WAS JUST GOING DOWN. CAPTAIN HALL TROD ON AN ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE. HE'S DEAD, SIR — THE BEST OFFICER 'C' COMPANY EVER HAD . . .



SNAITH STARED AFTER THE GRIEF-STRICKEN N.C.O. UNCONSCIOUS OF WHAT HE WAS DOING, HE FINGERED THE STAR-SHAPED MARK IN HIS PALM AND SEEMED TO HEAR AGAIN HASSAN'S PROPHECY — THAT THOSE ABOUT HIM WOULD DIE, WHILE HE WENT ON ASSURED OF RANK AND POWER . . .

WHAT THE HECK IS THE MATTER WITH ME? I'LL NEED SOMETHING MORE THAN HALL'S DEATH TO MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT ARAB HAD SOME MYSTIC INTUITION . . .



Chapter 2. *The Coward*

THE AFRIKA KORPS HAD COUNTER-ATTACKED ONCE AGAIN ACROSS THE TUNISIAN DESERT. THE SOUTH ANGLIAN REGIMENT WERE ORDERED TO HOLD EL AMOREZ AT ALL COSTS.



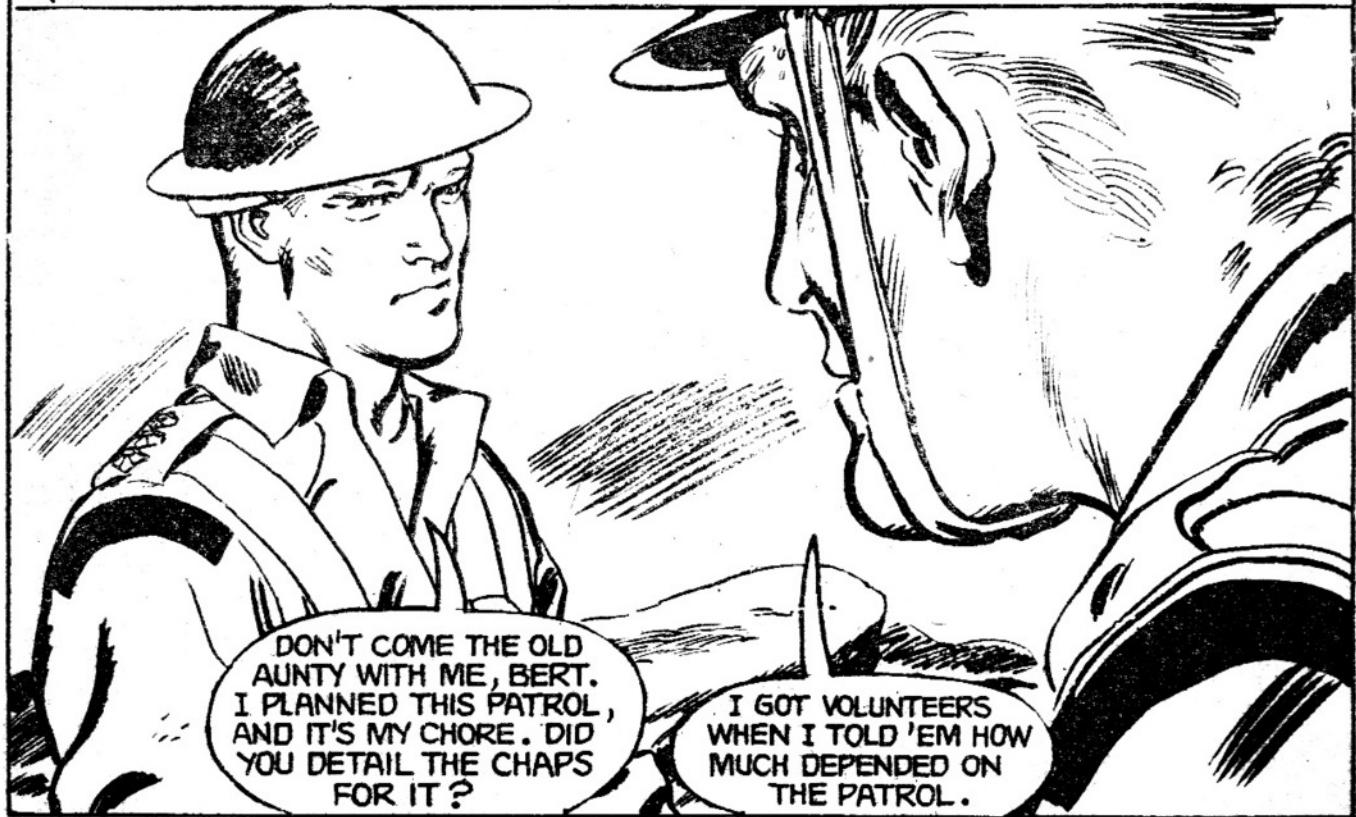
AT THAT MOMENT, CAPTAIN BILL SUMMERS — KNOWN TO HIS MEN AS 'THE BULLDOG' — STUDIED THE SCARRED NO MAN'S LAND IN FRONT OF 'B' COMPANY.

LET ME TAKE THE PATROL OUT TONIGHT, CAPTAIN SUMMERS. TOMORROW YOU'LL BE TAKING OVER THE COMPANY. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE YOU ON A PERISHING PATROL.

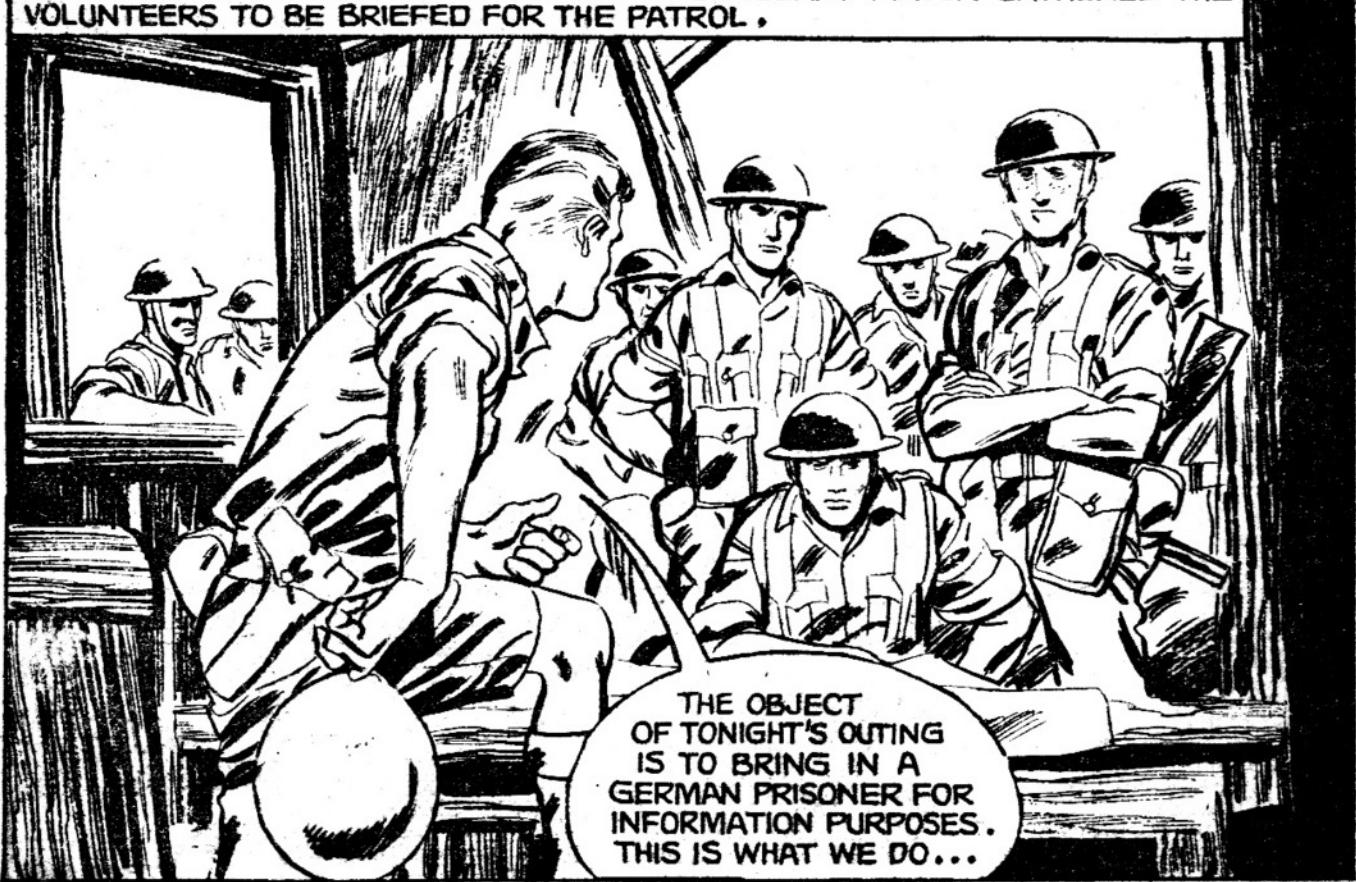


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SUMMERS HAD COME TO 'B' COMPANY AT ALAMEIN AS A PLATOON COMMANDER. THE SERGEANT-MAJOR HAD BEEN A CORPORAL THEN, FRESH FROM THE BARRACK-SQUARES OF ENGLAND. THEY HAD COME A LONG WAY TOGETHER SINCE THOSE DAYS...



SUMMERS FELT A GLOW OF PRIDE AS THE SERGEANT-MAJOR GATHERED THE VOLUNTEERS TO BE BRIEFED FOR THE PATROL.



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BUT SUMMERS HAD HARDLY STARTED THE BRIEFING WHEN THEY WERE INTERRUPTED BY AN OFFICER WHO ANNOUNCED HIMSELF WITH MILITARY PRECISION.

SO YOU'RE SNAITH? WELCOME TO THE COMPANY. TAKE A SEAT, WE'RE OFF PARADE ...



THE C.O. SENT ME TO SAY YOU'RE TO TAKE OVER THE COMPANY TONIGHT, SIR. HE SUGGESTS I TAKE THE PATROL OUT...

SUMMERS WAS ANNOYED AT MISSING THE PATROL, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO ABOUT IT...

DARN IT - BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED. TAKE THE SERGEANT-MAJOR ON THE PATROL, SNAITH. HE KNOWS THE SET-UP.



I'LL CONDUCT THE PATROL AS IT SHOULD BE DONE, SIR.

SNAITH LISTENED FRIGIDLY TO THE BRIEFING WHICH THE SERGEANT-MAJOR TOOK OVER, AND WHEN THE PATROL-PARTY DISPERSED TO GET READY THE SOLDIERS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER GLUMLY.

I WOULDN'T HAVE VOLUNTEERED IF I'D KNOWN THIS NEW BLOKE, SNAITH, WAS LEADING US TONIGHT. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF HIM...



NOR ME, MATE...

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THAT NIGHT, SNAITH LED THE PARTY OF FIFTEEN MEN OUT OF THE FORWARD FOXHOLES OF 'B' COMPANY. THIS WAS SNAITH'S FIRST TASTE OF ACTION AND FEAR'S ICY GRIP CLAMPED UPON HIM AS HE TOOK THE LEAD.



BUT BY THE TIME THE PATROL HAD REACHED THE FRINGE AREA OF GERMAN ACTIVITY, THE SERGEANT-MAJOR HAD NOTICED WITH ANXIETY SNAITH'S TENSE, SET FACE. HE REALISED THAT THE NEW OFFICER WAS IN NO STATE TO LEAD THEM.



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SNAITH TRIED TO WILL HIMSELF TO BELIEVE THE ARAB FORTUNE-TELLER'S PROPHECY THAT HE WOULD SURVIVE THE WAR. HE FORCED HIMSELF TO HIS FEET AND HIS VOICE CROAKED AN ORDER . . .

COME ON, THEN—
WHAT ARE WE
WAITING FOR?

THE CLOT—HE'LL
BE SEEN FOR MILES
AROUND, STANDING
ON THIS CREST!

HEADING THE SHAMBLING RUN DOWN THE SLOPE, SNAITH FELT THE SERGEANT-MAJOR'S HAND ON HIS ARM STEERING HIM TO NEW COVER.

A JERRY GUN—A BIG
ONE! THEY'RE DIGGING IN—
GET DOWN HERE BEFORE
THEY SEE US!

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SNAITH WAS UNABLE TO PRETEND ANY LONGER THAT HE WAS IN COMMAND OF THE SITUATION. AS THEY TOOK COVER, HE LET THE SERGEANT-MAJOR ISSUE THE ORDERS.



STUMBLING BEHIND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR, SNAITH WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A HYPNOTISED SPECTATOR OF THE CHAOS THAT FOLLOWED.



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JONES PULLED THE PIN FROM HIS GRENADE AND THRUST IT INTO THE BREACH OF THE GERMAN GUN. JUST IN TIME, HE LEAPED CLEAR.



SO FAR IT HAD BEEN A COMPLETE VICTORY FOR THE PATROL. BUT SOME OF THE GERMAN VETERANS HAD RECOVERED THEMSELVES AND WERE FIGHTING BACK. SNAITH SAW ONLY A TRIUMPH IN WHICH HE MUST HAVE HIS PART.



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CONFIDENT THE FIGHT WAS AS GOOD AS WON, SNAITH LED THE PATROL ACROSS THE OPEN GROUND. THE GERMANS TURNED A WITHERING FIRE ON THEIR ATTACKERS.

SNAITH'S BUNGLED THE WHOLE SHOW - WE'VE GOT TO OVERRUN THOSE JERRIES NOW, BEFORE THEY FINISH US ALL OFF!



SNAITH, SHAKEN AT THE FIERCE RESPONSE OF THE GERMANS, PLUNGED FOR COVER. NO ONE IN THE PATROL WAS FIRING NOW. BUT THE SERGEANT-MAJOR THREW ONE LAST GRENADE.

KEEP FIRING - IT'S THEM OR US!





BUT THERE WERE NO WATCHING GERMANS WHEN SNAITH CRAWLED OUT OF THE PALL OF DEATH THAT HUNG OVER THE WOOD.



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HE SCRAMBLED BACK UP THE SLOPE FROM WHICH THE BRITISH PATROL HAD COME, REMEMBERING TO RELOAD HIS TOMMY-GUN. IT WAS THEN THAT HE SAW THE UNMISTAKABLE SILHOUETTE OF MOVING GERMANS . . .



THE FIGURES WERE RIGHT IN THE PATH BETWEEN SNAITH AND THE COMPARATIVE SAFETY OF 'B' COMPANY LINES. IN THAT MOMENT SNAITH ACTED LIKE A CORNERED ANIMAL . . .



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IN SECONDS IT WAS OVER. HE SAW THE JERKING FIGURES FALL. THEN AS HE APPROACHED THEM, WARY OF ANY MOVEMENT, HE FROZE IN SUDDEN SHOCK . . .

THEY'RE BRITISH!
IT'S CORPORAL PENNY'S
SECTION. BUT IT WAS
GERMANS I SAW
JUST NOW!



COLD SWEAT BEADED HIS FOREHEAD AS HE RECOGNISED THE MEN OF HIS COMPANY. THEN HE HEARD A FAINT MOAN FROM NEARBY, AND SUDDENLY HE UNDERSTOOD HOW HE HAD MADE THE DREADFUL BLUNDER.

A GERMAN!
THAT'S IT — PENNY HAD
ALREADY CAPTURED
PRISONERS.. THAT ONE
IS STILL ALIVE . . .



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THE WOUNDED GERMAN, BARELY CONSCIOUS, WAS MUTTERING DELIRIOUSLY. SNAITH, WHO KNEW SOME GERMAN, MADE OUT THE BROKEN WORDS...



RELIEF FLOODED THROUGH SNAITH. THE WOUNDED GERMAN HAD NO IDEA IT WAS A BRITISH OFFICER WHO HAD KILLED THE PATROL. HE KNEW WHAT HE MEANT TO DO.



A MINUTE LATER, MEN OF 'B' COMPANY WERE RELIEVING HIM OF HIS SEMI-CONSCIOUS PRISONER.

WE'LL LOOK AFTER THE PRISONER, CAPTAIN SNAITH — AND WE'LL WATCH FOR THE REST OF THE PATROL.

YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER — THEY'RE ALL DEAD.



IN THE BLACKED-OUT TRUCK WHICH SERVED AS HEADQUARTERS FOR BILL SUMMERS, SIMON SNAITH TOLD OF THE RAID — A VERSION ALREADY FORMULATED IN HIS MIND.

... I KNOCKED OUT THE GERMAN GUN AND I HAD THE PRISONER. THEN ANOTHER LARGE GERMAN PARTY ATTACKED US. WE HAD NO CHANCE. BUT I WAS LUCKY. THEY LEFT US ALL FOR DEAD ...



SUMMERS STARED CLOSELY AT SNAITH, WHO HAD NOW RECOVERED HIS NERVE, CONFIDENT THAT NO ONE COULD CONTRADICT HIS STORY.

IF ONLY I COULD HAVE TAKEN THAT PATROL OUT, IT MIGHT HAVE GONE DIFFERENTLY.



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SUMMERS WAS FILLED WITH BITTERNESS AND SORROW AT THE LOSS OF SO MANY MEN. BUT HE HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT SNAITH.

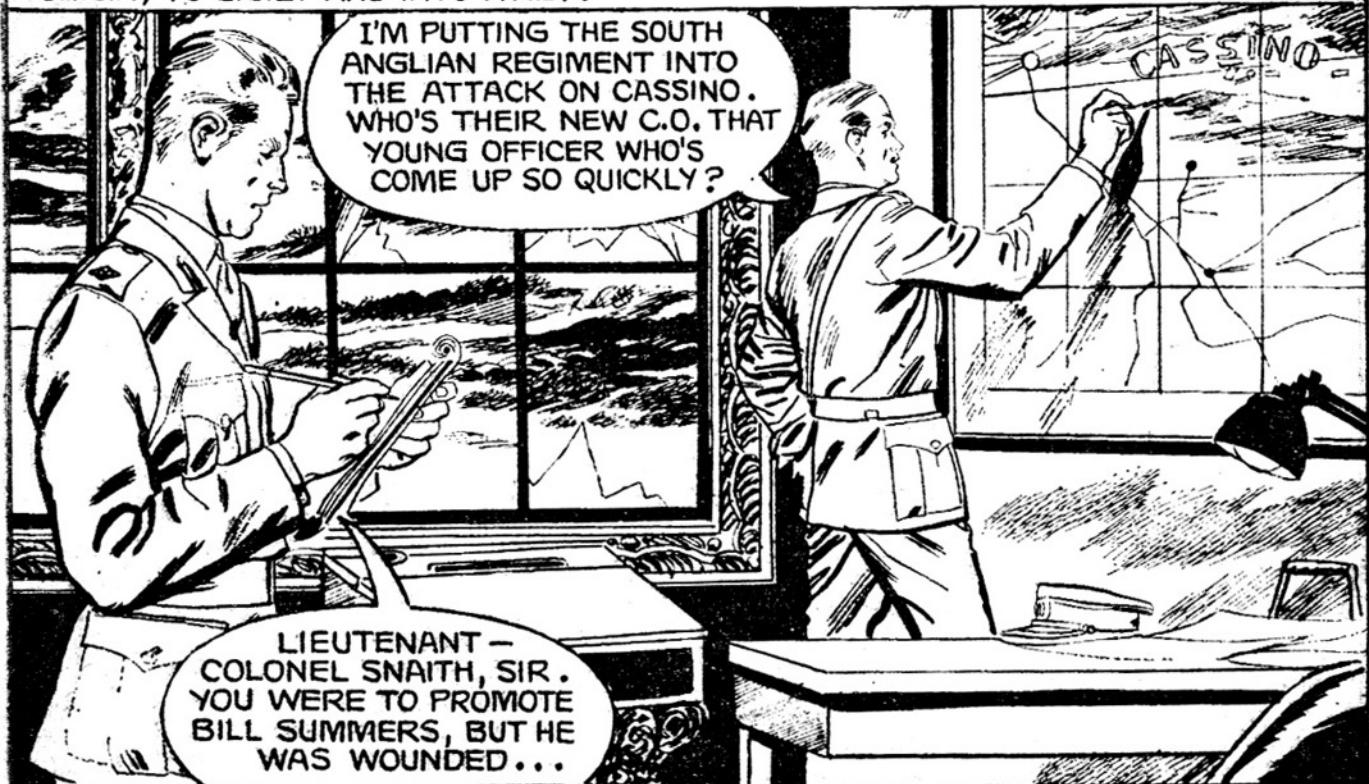


BEFORE SNAITH CRAWLED INTO HIS BIVOUAC THAT NIGHT, HE STARED WONDERINGLY AT THE STAR-SHAPED MARK ON HIS PALM. NOW EXULTATION SURGED THROUGH HIM. HE KNEW THAT NEVER AGAIN WOULD HE HAVE ANY FEAR OF BATTLE . . .



Chapter 3. *The Killer*

THE TEMPEST OF WAR SWEPT TO NEW FURY IN THE ENSUING MONTHS, THROUGH TUNISIA, TO SICILY AND INTO ITALY.



AT THAT MOMENT, BILL SUMMERS WAS NEWLY OUT OF HOSPITAL AND ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE FRONT LINE WITH OTHER OFFICERS.



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THE TRUCK WAS NEARING THE LINES OF THE SOUTH ANGLIAN REGIMENT, POISED IN THE FOOTHILLS TO ATTACK THAT GRIM BASTION OF GERMAN STRENGTH, MONTE CASSINO.

YOU MEAN THIS FELLOW DOESN'T CARE IF HE'S BLOWN TO BITS?



SUMMERS DROPPED OFF AT HIS REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS. THE TIME HAD COME FOR HIM TO MEET AGAIN THE MAN OF WHOM HE HAD SPOKEN - THE MAN WHO HAD NO FEAR . . .

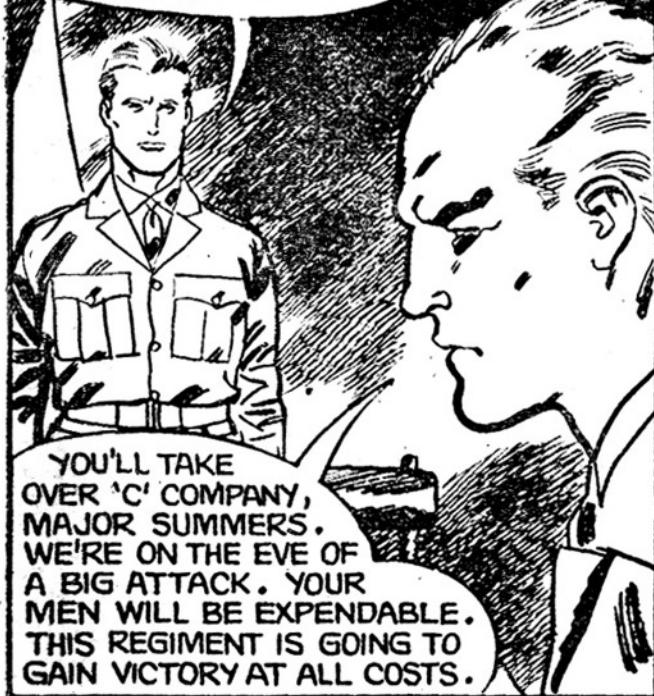


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AGAIN SUMMERS FACED SNAITH, THE OFFICER WHO HAD WON PROMOTION TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WITH RUTHLESS INDIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES OF HIS MEN.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW COMMAND, COLONEL SNAITH.



SUMMERS GAZED COLDLY AT HIS COMMANDING OFFICER.

REMEMBER YOUR FIRST PATROL IN TUNISIA, WHEN ONLY YOU RETURNED? DID YOU KNOW THERE WAS ONE SURVIVOR? HE WAS TAKEN PRISONER BY THE GERMANS. I HAD A LETTER FROM HIM WHEN I WAS IN HOSPITAL.

ONE OF THEM STILL LIVES?



ALWAYS SNAITH HAD THRUST AWAY FROM HIM THE MEMORY OF THAT FATEFUL PATROL. BUT IF SOMEONE LIVED FROM THAT PATROL, HIS WHOLE CAREER WAS MENACED.



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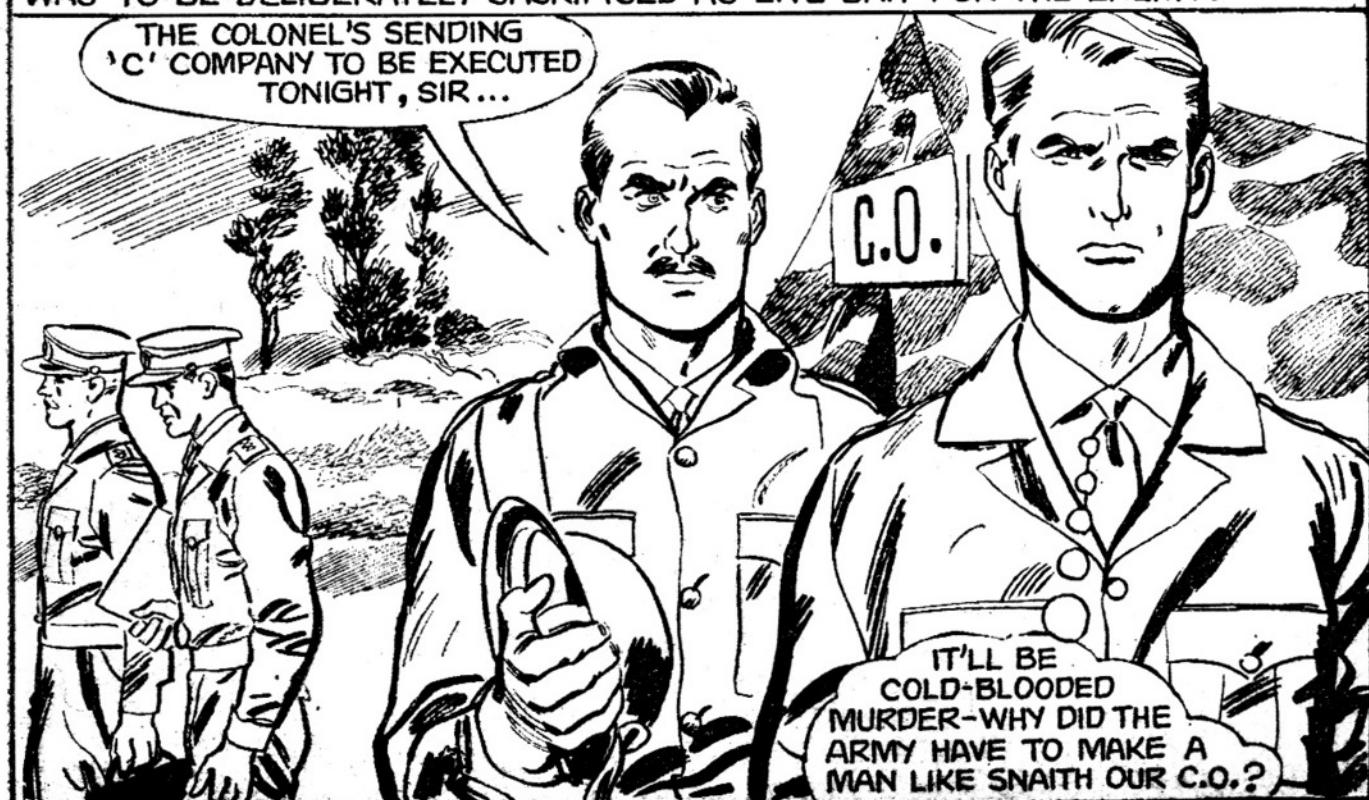
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STILL SEETHING WITH RAGE, SNAITH CALLED FOR HIS ADJUTANT AND BEGAN WORKING OUT THE BATTLE PLAN FOR THE REGIMENT'S NIGHT ATTACK ON THE DEADLY OBSTACLE COURSE TO CASSINO KNOWN AS 'INFERNO HILL'.



SNAITH'S PLAN WAS COMPLETED. THE REGIMENT'S ORDER GROUPS WERE BRIEFED. NOW EVERY OFFICER AND SENIOR N.C.O. KNEW THAT 'C' COMPANY WAS TO BE DELIBERATELY SACRIFICED AS LIVE BAIT FOR THE ENEMY.



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OUTWARDLY CALM, SUMMERS FELT BITTER AS HE REALISED THE MEANING OF THE ORDERS GIVEN TO HIM. BUT THEY WERE ORDERS AND, AS SUCH, THEY HAD TO BE CARRIED OUT.

WE'LL DO OUR BEST, MAJOR SUMMERS.
I'LL TAKE THE LEADING PLATOONS UP
TO THE STARTLINE.

I'M LEADING 'EM ON THIS
PARTY, TOM. I WANT YOU TO
LOOK AFTER THE COMPANY
H.Q. GROUP.



AS THE MOON ROSE, SUMMERS SCRAMBLED FROM THE GULLY ON TO THE FIRST SLOPE OF INFERNO HILL. AHEAD, THE LAST BURSTS OF THE BRITISH ARTILLERY BARRAGE ERUPTED ON THE HEIGHTS THAT "C" COMPANY HAD BEEN ORDERED TO CAPTURE.

ALL RIGHT,
LET'S GO!





The Brave And The Damned

SUMMERS SAW HIS MEN STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL IN THAT STORM OF BULLETS. THE FIRE CAME FROM THE FIRST GERMAN OUTPOST — "C" COMPANY HAD NOT EVEN SILENCED THE ENEMY HALF-WAY HOUSE ON THEIR JOURNEY UP INFERNO HILL.

MAKE FOR THAT RIDGE AHEAD, AND WE'LL START THE RUN IN FROM COVER.



THEY FLUNG THEMSELVES, PANTING AND EXHAUSTED, INTO THE DITCHES THAT WERE THEIR LAST HAVEN BEFORE THEY MADE THEIR ATTEMPT TO PULL THE TEETH OF THE ENEMY DEFENCES.

WE'VE LOST THREE OF THE OFFICERS AND ABOUT A THIRD OF THE MEN, SIR.

WE'LL SPLIT INTO TWO PARTIES. I'LL TAKE THIS PLATOON UP TO THE FIRST NEST OF JERRY GUNS, WHILE THE REST OF THE COMPANY GIVES COVERING FIRE.



THE ORDERS WERE PASSED TO THE OTHER PLATOON COMMANDERS, AND THEN SUMMERS AND HIS PARTY RENEWED THEIR ATTACK ON THE HILL OF DEATH.



NEXT MOMENT, THE FIRST WAVE OF 'C' COMPANY WERE ON TOP OF THE FIRST GERMAN WEAPON-PITS, AND THE CARNAGE REACHED A NEW PITCH OF FEROCITY.



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THE GERMANS FOUGHT WITH THE DESPERATION OF MEN WHO KNEW THAT THIS WAS A NIGHT OF NO QUARTER. BUT WITH THE SECOND WAVE OF 'C' COMPANY SURGING THROUGH THEIR POSITIONS, THEY WERE OVERWHELMED.

THE C.O. IS ON THE RADIO ASKING FOR A REPORT.

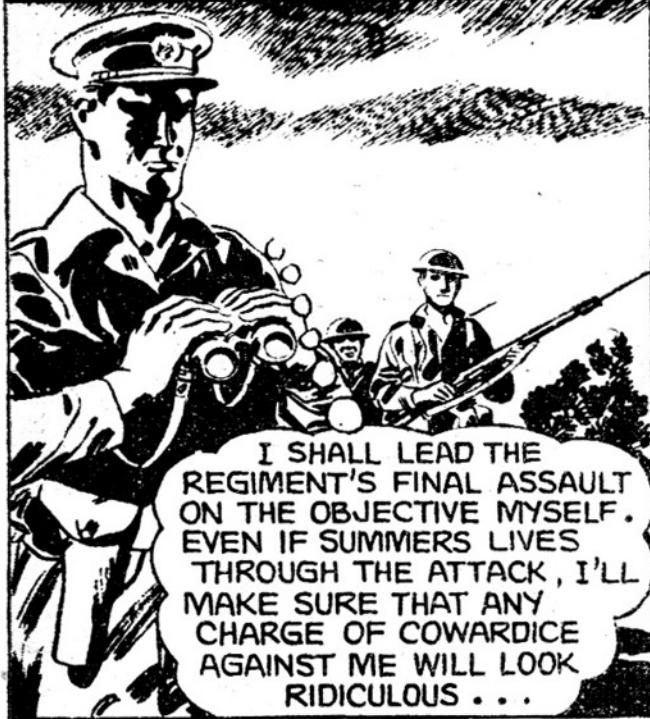
TELL HIM WE'VE TAKEN HALF-WAY HOUSE. GIVE THE CASUALTY TOTAL. TELL HIM THAT WITH TANK SUPPORT A HANDFUL OF THE COMPANY MIGHT REACH THE OBJECTIVE.

SNAITH AND HIS REGIMENTAL H.Q. GROUP ON A NEIGHBOURING HILL, FROM WHICH THE DISTANT BATTLE COULD BE OBSERVED, WERE HANDED THE REPORT FROM 'C' COMPANY.

MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF 'C' COMPANY ARE KILLED, SIR. THE REST OF THE REGIMENT COULD COVER THEIR WITHDRAWAL—

I AM NOT WITHDRAWING THEM — TELL SUMMERS TO GET ON WITH THE ATTACK. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THAT HILL, WHATEVER THE COST!

THE RUTHLESS C.O. WAITED FOR THE CRUCIAL MOMENT, WHEN THE GERMANS WOULD BE INTENT ONLY ON DISPOSING OF THE BADLY CRIPPLED 'C' COMPANY. THAT WOULD BE THE MOMENT FOR SNAITH TO ORDER THE REGIMENT INTO A FLANK ATTACK.



HE GAVE THE ORDER, SAW HIS COMPANIES MOVING UP, FOR THEIR FIRST ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ENEMY IN A WAR-RUINED HAMLET ON THE FLANK OF INFERNO HILL.



SNAITH'S DRIVER HEADED INTO THE LETHAL HAILSTORM, HIS NERVES TAUT TO BREAKING POINT. BUT SNAITH, CONFIDENT AS EVER OF HIS IMMUNITY FROM DEATH, GAVE ALL HIS MIND TO THE CONDUCT OF THE BATTLE.



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THE DRIVER GRITTED HIS TEETH AT SNAITH'S SCATHING CONTEMPT AND DROVE CRAZILY ON AT RISK OF OVERTURNING ANY MOMENT.



EVEN AS SNAITH LEAPED FROM THE JEEP TO TAKE OVER FROM THE ASTONISHED 'A' COMPANY COMMANDER, THE WHISTLE OF AN ARMOUR-PIERCING SHELL ENDED IN A SHATTERING IMPACT.



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BUT SNAITH HAD LEAPED CLEAR IN THE NICK OF TIME. HE PICKED HIMSELF UP FROM THE ROAD UNHURT BY THE SHELL THAT HAD SHATTERED HIS JEEP AND KILLED HIS DRIVER.

ARE YOU SUPPOSED
TO BE SOLDIERS? THERE'S
FIGHTING TO DO. GET UP THAT
HILL INTO THE VILLAGE!



SNAITH WAS EVERYWHERE THAT NIGHT. WHEREVER THE BATTLE WAS THICKEST, HE WOULD APPEAR LIKE A MALEVOLENT TYRANT SCOURGING HIS REGIMENT INTO FEATS THAT SEEMED BEYOND ENDURANCE.

WE'RE TOO LATE TO SAVE 'C' COMPANY. MAJOR SUMMERS AND THE LAST HANDFUL OF THEM HAVE REACHED THEIR OBJECTIVE.

IT'S OUR OBJECTIVE,
TOO—GET THE REGIMENT
MOVING.



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AS THE MAULED REGIMENT BRACED ITSELF FOR THE ATTACK ON THE SUMMIT OF INFERNO HILL, SNAITH HALTED HIS OWN EFFORTS TO WATCH SUMMERS IN HIS DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS.



BUT IT WAS DAWN BEFORE THE REGIMENT TOOK THE HILL OF DEATH WHERE 'C' COMPANY HAD BEEN SACRIFICED. SNAITH'S MEN SANK ALONGSIDE THEIR DEAD COMRADES, AND STARED IN AWED, UNWILLING ADMIRATION AT THEIR FEROCIOUS COMMANDER.



AS IF IN A VISION FROM THE PAST, SNAITH SAW THE HAUNTING FACE OF AN OLD ARAB FORTUNE-TELLER.



Chapter 4. *The Devil*

MONTH BY MONTH THE TENTACLES OF THE NAZI OCTOPUS WERE BEING CHOPPED FROM THEIR STRANGLEHOLD ON EUROPE. NOT ONLY THE ALLIED ARMIES AND NAVIES, BUT PARTISANS LIKE THOSE IN JUGOSLAVIA INTENSIFIED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE HARASSED GERMANS.



WHEN THE PLANE LANDED, A BRITISH OFFICER JUMPED DOWN AND GREETED THE PARTISAN LEADER.

I AM LOOKING FOR A BRITISH MAJOR- ONE WHO WAS WOUNDED AND CAPTURED BY THE GERMANS AT CASSINO. HE ESCAPED FROM HIS PRISON HOSPITAL INTO JUGOSLAVIA. HE IS MAJOR BILL SUMMERS.

PARDON MY WHISKERS, OLD MAN, BUT I'M BILL SUMMERS!



The Brave And The Damned

AFTER RECOVERING FROM HIS WOUNDS, SUMMERS HAD STAYED ON WITH THE PARTISANS AT THE REQUEST OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS H.Q. AND BECAME A GUERRILLA LEADER OF RENOWN.





SNAITH, COLD AND INSCRUTABLE, MET SUMMERS AT A BIG TRAINING CAMP NEXT DAY. HE NO LONGER FELT ANY FEAR OF THE MAN HE HAD ONCE TRIED TO SEND TO HIS DEATH— FOR HIS OWN HIGH POSITION WAS SECURE ...



The Brave And The Damned

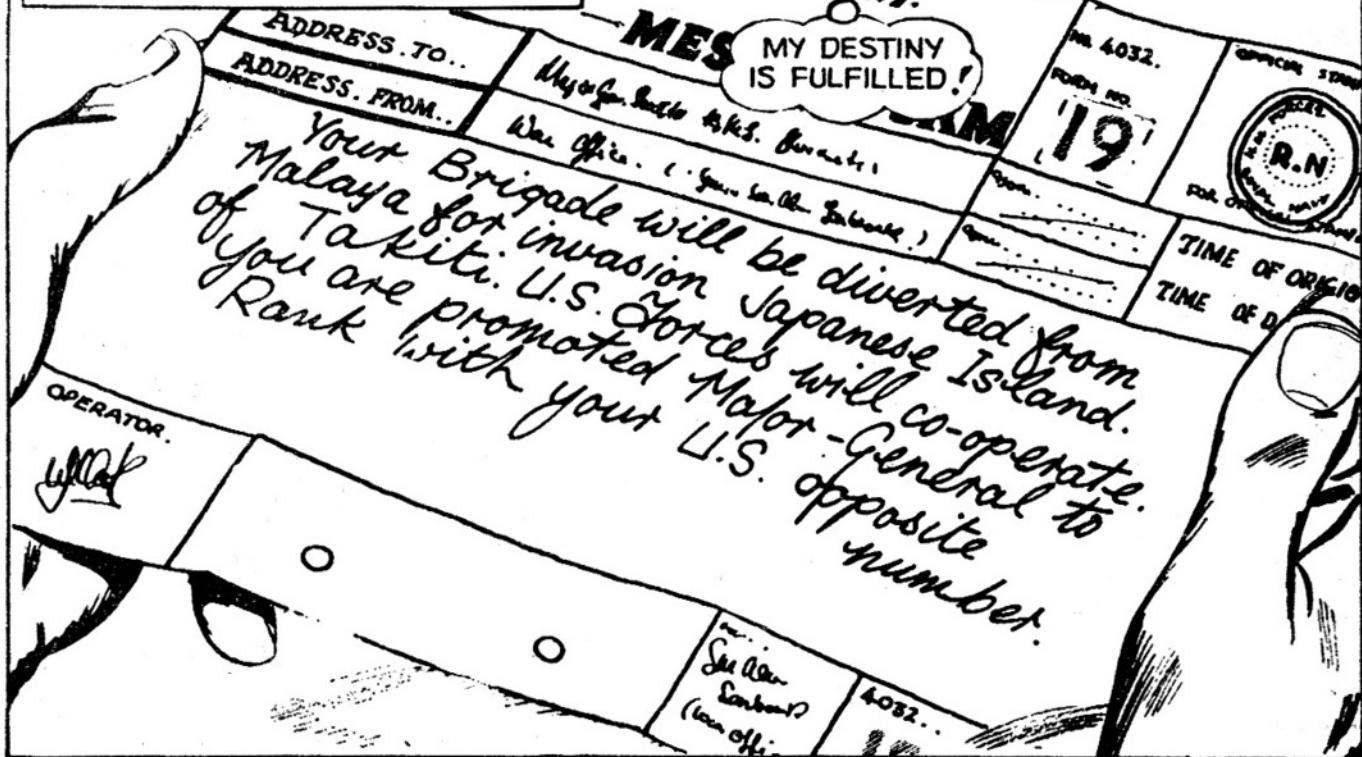
IN THOSE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, NAZI GERMANY WAS FINALLY OVERTHROWN, AND THE RETREAT OF THE JAPANESE IN THE FAR EAST LEFT SNAITH'S BRIGADE WITHOUT A JOB. FURIOUS, HE SAW HIS CHANCES FADING OF EMERGING FROM THE WAR AS A GENERAL.



EVENTUALLY SNAITH HAD HIS WAY, AND HIS THREE REGIMENTS WERE EMBARKED FOR MALAYA.



SNAITH READ THE DECODED MESSAGE, DREADING THAT IT MIGHT BE AN ORDER FOR HIS BRIGADE TO RETURN TO ENGLAND. THEN TRIUMPH SURGED THROUGH HIM .



HE WENT TO FIND THE RADIO OFFICER TO TRANSMIT HIS MESSAGE ACCEPTING HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, BUT THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN HALTED HIM.



The Brave And The Damned

THE LURKING FEAR IN SNAITH'S SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND, HIS ONLY FEAR SINCE A FAR-OFF DAY IN TUNISIA, JERKED SUDDENLY TO LIFE.

EVERY WORD THAT ARAB TOLD ME IN TUNISIA HAS COME TRUE — AND HE WARNED ME THAT THE DEVIL ALONE COULD KILL ME...



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, SNAITH FELT HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE DRAINING OUT OF HIM. NERVES HE HAD FORGOTTEN HE POSSESSED WERE ALIVE AND TAUT AGAIN.

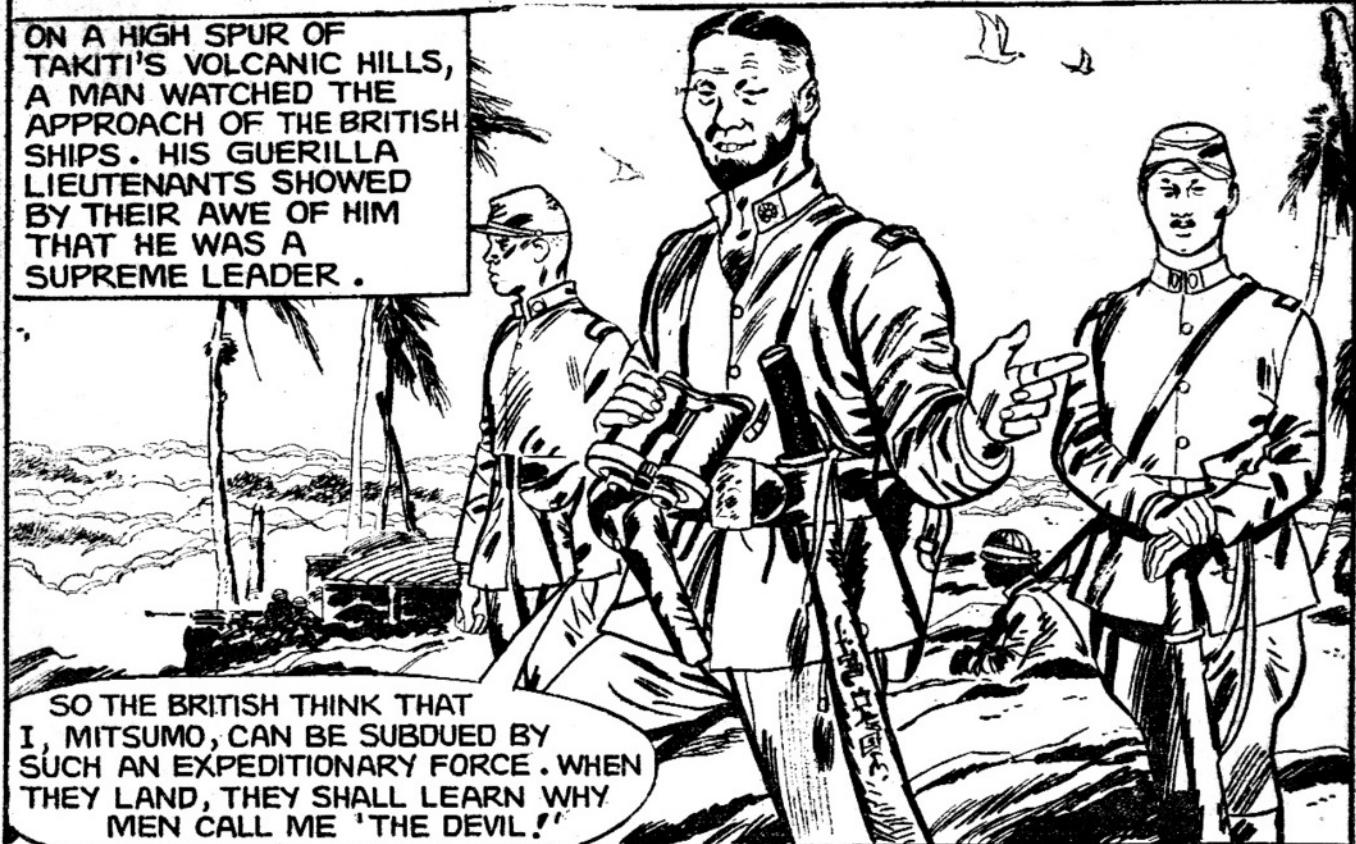
YOU
LOOK UPSET,
GENERAL.

IT — IT'S THIS
TROPIC HEAT. IT'S
NOTHING ...



Chapter 5. Hell's Playground

ON A HIGH SPUR OF TAKITI'S VOLCANIC HILLS, A MAN WATCHED THE APPROACH OF THE BRITISH SHIPS. HIS GUERILLA LIEUTENANTS SHOWED BY THEIR AWE OF HIM THAT HE WAS A SUPREME LEADER.



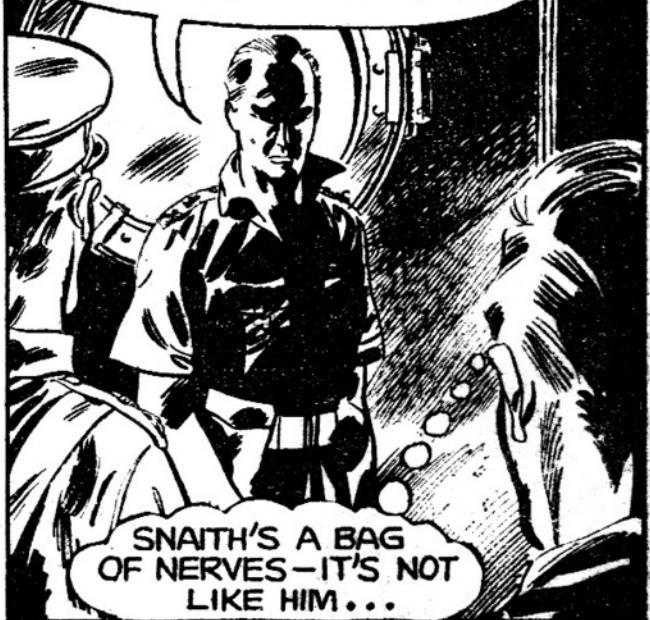
SO THE BRITISH THINK THAT I, MITSUMO, CAN BE SUBDUED BY SUCH AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE. WHEN THEY LAND, THEY SHALL LEARN WHY MEN CALL ME 'THE DEVIL'!

ON BOARD THE FLAGSHIP OF THE BRITISH FLOTILLA, MAJOR-GENERAL SNAITH TRIED TO CONQUER HIS NAMELESS FEARS — NOT LESSENED BECAUSE THE AMERICAN FORCE HAD BEEN CALLED AWAY TO ANOTHER TROUBLE SPOT.



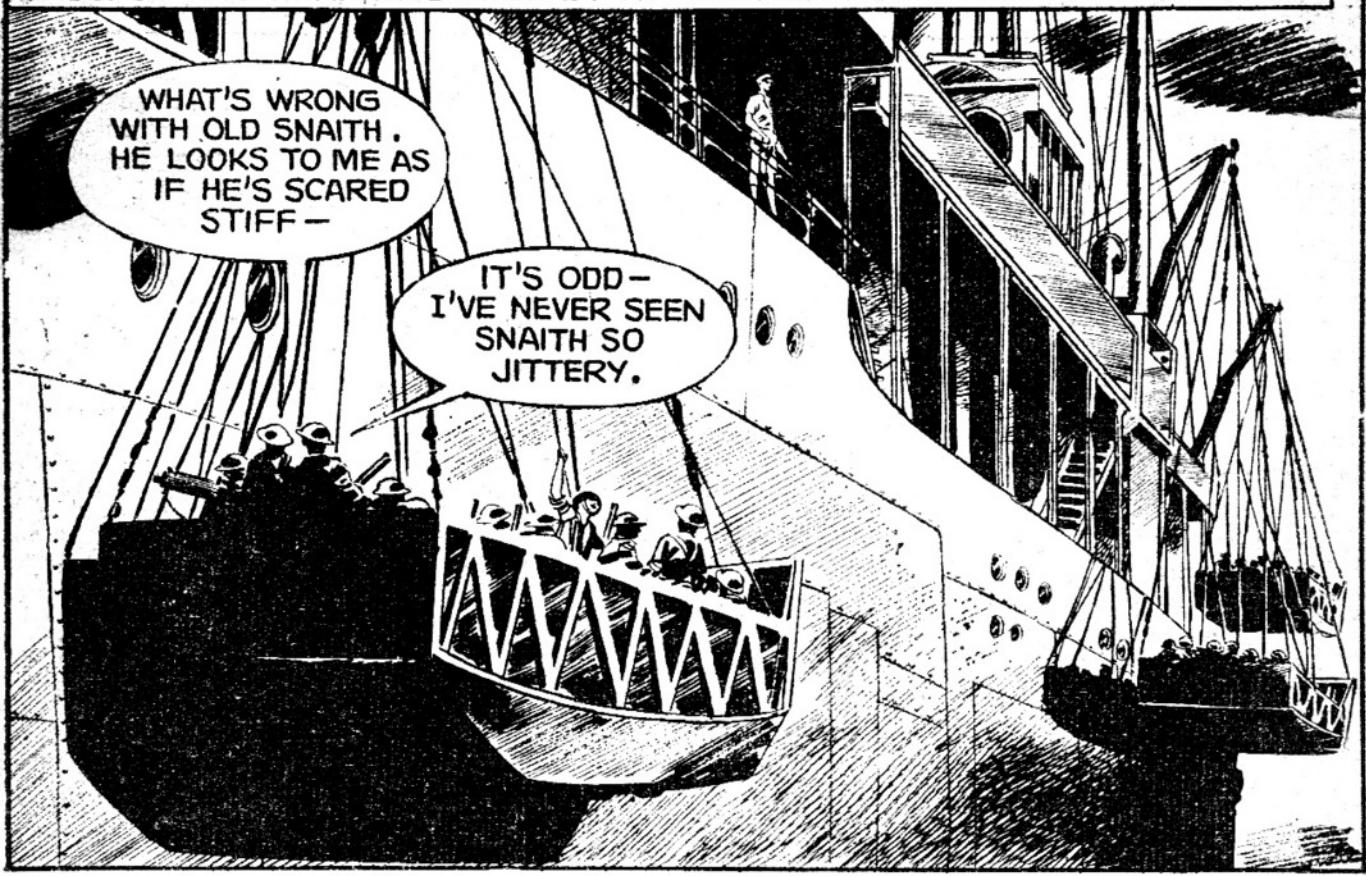
SNAITH TRIED TO CONCENTRATE. BUT FOR TOO LONG NOW HE HAD BUILT ALL HIS SUCCESS ON AN ARAB SOOTHSAYER'S PROMISE.

WE'D BETTER USE THE PLAN WE WORKED OUT THIS MORNING. SUMMERS WILL LEAD THE BEACH LANDING — THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE DAWN.



The Brave And The Damned

PINNACES TOOK THE UNIT COMMANDERS BACK TO THEIR SHIPS AND THEIR TROOPS. ALL WERE MYSTIFIED BY THE CHANGE THAT HAD COME OVER SNAITH.



FROM 3 A.M. THE NEXT MORNING BRITISH NAVAL SHELLS PLASTERED THE APPROACHES TO THE BEST LANDING POINT FOR THE INVADING FORCES. BUT ACCORDING TO PLAN, SUMMERS MOUNTED A SWIFT ASSAULT ON A NEIGHBOURING BEACH.



The Brave And The Damned

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SUMMERS' INSTINCT WAS RIGHT. AS HIS MEN ADVANCED ON TO THE BEACH, THE JAPS OPENED UP A DEADLY CROSS FIRE WITH HEAVY MACHINE-GUNS.

KEEP
THE MEN
MOVING!



IF THEY WAVERED NOW, HE KNEW THAT THEY WOULD BE DRIVEN BACK INTO THE SEA. THEY HAD TO PLUNGE THROUGH THE WITHERING FIRE THAT SWEPT THE EXPOSED BEACH.

COME ON—
MAKE FOR THE
ROCKS!



The Brave And The Damned

HE REACHED THE FIRST LINE OF COVER, AND HIS BADLY HIT FIRST PLATOONS STAGGERED AFTER HIM.

PUT THAT JAP GUN POSITION OUT OF ACTION, MAJOR. OUR SECOND WAVE WILL BE ASHORE IN TEN MINUTES—I'M GOING TO CLEAR THE GROUND IN FRONT OF US.



WHILE THE MAJOR ENGAGED THE JAP GUN-CREW, SUMMERS PLUNGED ON, MAKING FOR THE TREES BEYOND THE BEACH.

IT'S A JAP RESERVE FORCE. THEY HAVEN'T SEEN US YET!





The Brave And The Damned

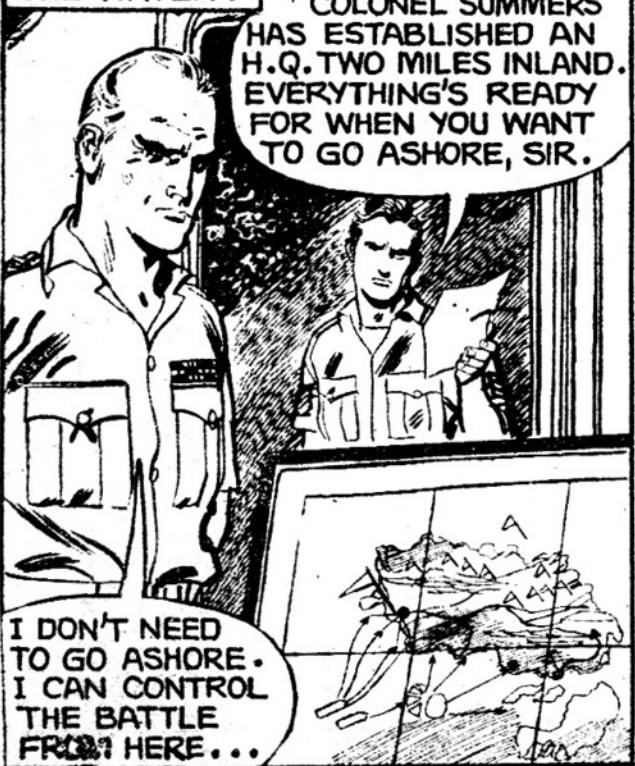
BY THE END OF THE DAY, SUMMERS HAD ESTABLISHED A BRIDGEHEAD. HE HAD A FOOTHOLD NOW FOR THE MAIN BATTLES IN THE TREACHEROUS FORESTS AND ON THE HILL-SLOPES OF TAKITI.

SIGNAL THE GENERAL:
'BEACH-HEAD HELD. PHASE ONE COMPLETED. JAPS FIGHTING HARD...'



ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP, SNAITH DID NOT EVEN APPEAR ON DECK WHILE THE FIGHTING GREW FIERCE ON THE ISLAND TWO MILES DISTANT ACROSS THE WATER.

COLONEL SUMMERS HAS ESTABLISHED AN H.Q. TWO MILES INLAND. EVERYTHING'S READY FOR WHEN YOU WANT TO GO ASHORE, SIR.



SNAITH WAS A CHANGED MAN. HIS STAFF COULD HARDLY RECOGNISE NOW THE TENSE, NERVOUS GENERAL AS THE RUTHLESS, SINGLE-MINDED LEADER THEY HAD KNOWN HIM ONCE TO BE.

IF ONLY I COULD GET RID OF THIS FEAR... I'M SAFE ABOARD SHIP. MITSUMO'S A MAN, NOT A DEVIL -WHATEVER HE LIKES TO CALL HIMSELF.



The Brave And The Damned

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AS SUMMERS FOUGHT HIS WAY DOGGEDLY INLAND, SNAITH BECAME ALMOST A RECLUSE IN HIS ROOM ABOARD SHIP. THEN, ONE EVENING, A RADIO BULLETIN RINGED THE WORLD...

THIS IS THE B.B.C. FAR EASTERN SERVICE. WE HAVE A MOMENTOUS ANNOUNCEMENT. JAPAN HAS CAPITULATED. THE WAR IS AT AN END...

THE WAR IS OVER! THAT MEANS MITSUMO WILL SURRENDER! I'LL BE SAFE!



ALL THE NEXT DAY, THE RADIO REPORTED THE SURRENDER OF VARIOUS UNITS OF THE JAPANESE FORCES. BUT EVEN IN HIS JUBILATION, GENERAL SNAITH MEANT TO TAKE NO CHANCES WITH HIS OWN PARTICULAR ENEMY...



FIFTEEN MILES AWAY, MITSUMO HAD SUMMONED HIS LIEUTENANTS TO HIS SECRET HEADQUARTERS — AN UNDERGROUND GALLERY IN THE CATACOMBS WHERE TAKITI TRIBESMEN BURIED THEIR DEAD.



The Brave And The Damned

MITSUMO STRODE OUT OF THE WARREN OF CAVES, BECKONING TO ONE OF HIS OFFICERS. IN THE SUNSHINE, THE MAIN PART OF HIS FORCE WAS ENCAMPED.



MITSUMO HAD WORKED OUT THE PLAN A WEEK BEFORE - AS SOON AS HE HAD FIRST REALISED THAT JAPAN WAS BOUND TO BE DEFEATED.



MITSUMO WAS SATISFIED, AND THE JAPANESE MADE THEIR FINAL PREPARATIONS — HOGAWA DRESSED IN THE CEREMONIAL STYLE OF A FULL COLONEL OF THE EMPEROR'S ARMY.

THE ENGLISH FOOLS WILL NOT SUSPECT THE PLAN. AT THE RIGHT MOMENT WE SHALL FALL UPON THEM — NEVER SHALL WE SURRENDER ...



TWO HOURS LATER THE INSCRUTABLE LIEUTENANT, SAYING THAT HE WAS MITSUMO, SURRENDERED HIS SWORD WITH DIGNITY.



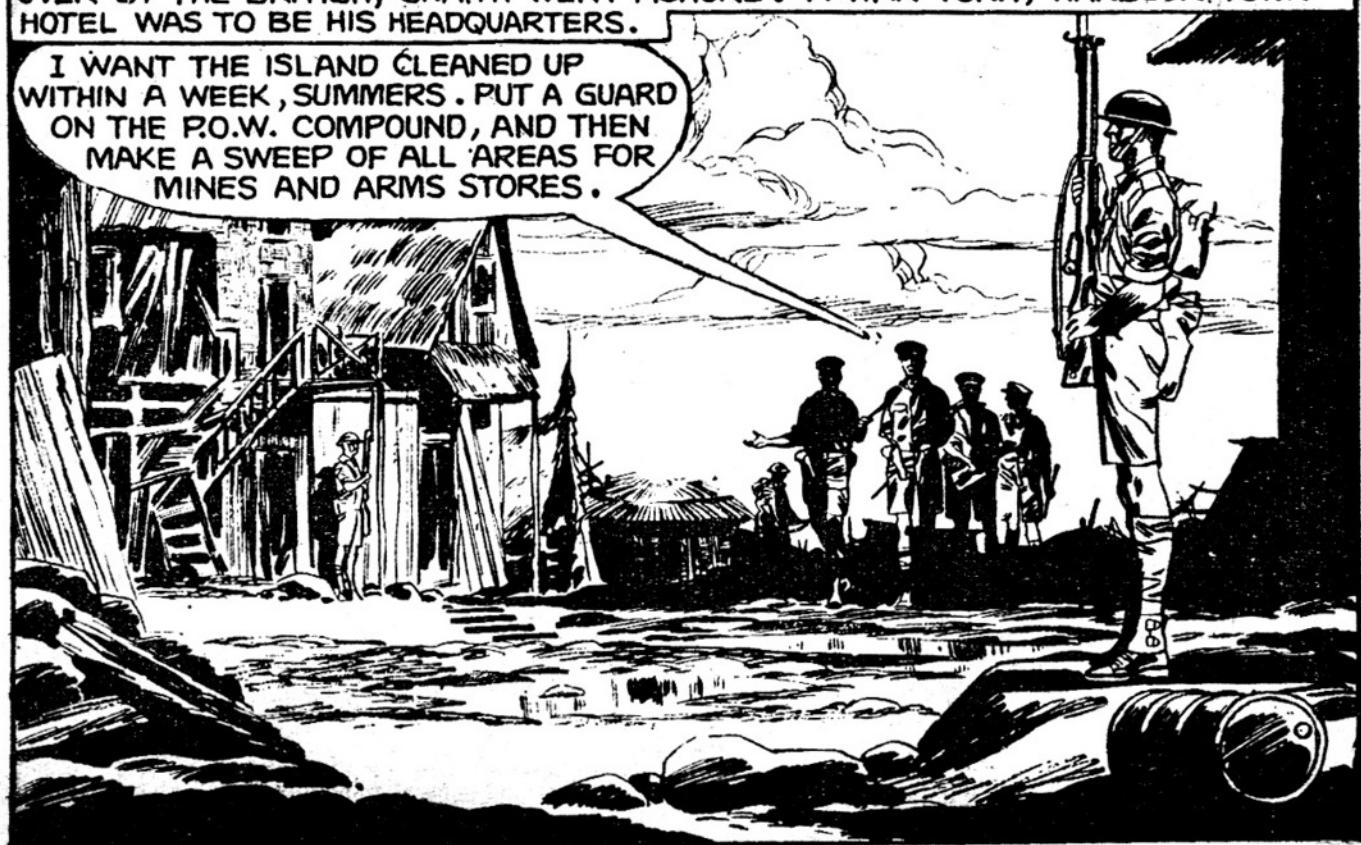
The Brave And The Damned

THE JAP SURRENDER COMMISSION WAS SEARCHED FOR ARMS, AND ESCORTED ABOARD SHIP. SNAITH WATCHED WARILY FROM THE BRIDGE. AS SOON AS HE SAW THE MAN HE TOOK TO BE MITSUMO, RELIEF FLOODED THROUGH HIM.



THREE DAYS LATER, WHEN THE FORMER JAPANESE POSITIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE BRITISH, SNAITH WENT ASHORE. A WAR-TORN, HARBOUR-TOWN HOTEL WAS TO BE HIS HEADQUARTERS.

I WANT THE ISLAND CLEANED UP WITHIN A WEEK, SUMMERS. PUT A GUARD ON THE P.O.W. COMPOUND, AND THEN MAKE A SWEEP OF ALL AREAS FOR MINES AND ARMS STORES.



IT WAS LATE THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, WHEN SUMMERS HAD STARTED OFF ON HIS SEARCH OF THE ISLAND, THAT SNAITH REALISED SOMETHING HAD GONE SERIOUSLY WRONG.

SNAITH STORMED TO THE SIGNAL QUARTERS, AND SENT RECALL MESSAGES TO THE COMPANIES HE HAD DESPATCHED INLAND.



APART FROM ONE GENERAL PURPOSES DETACHMENT, THE ONLY TROOPS SNAITH COULD SEND AGAINST THE JAPS WERE CLERKS, COOKS AND RADIO-OPERATORS ...



The Brave And The Damned

SNAITH ORDERED HIS MAIN FORCE TO OCCUPY THE NEAREST BUILDINGS, TO DEFEND HIS HOTEL HEADQUARTERS.



SNAITH HELPED TO BREAK OPEN BOXES OF AMMUNITION, AS THE FIERCE RATTLE OF FIRING NEARED THE HOTEL. NOW THE YELLS OF TRIUMPHANT JAPS COULD BE HEARD.



BUT THE COLD HAND OF PANIC GRIPPED SNAITH AS HE HEARD THE BAYING OF THE HUMAN HUNTERS OUTSIDE.

THAT IS MITSUMO!
WHOMEVER IT WAS
SURRENDERED TO US,
THE REAL MITSUMO IS
HERE NOW. IT'S THE
DEVIL HIMSELF!



CLAMMY WITH FEAR, SNAITH TURNED LIKE A HUNTED ANIMAL AS THE DOOR BURST OPEN AND A SHOT RANG OUT.



The Brave And The Damned



SNAITH TRIED TO RAISE HIS PISTOL, BUT HIS HAND WAS NERVELESS. ALL HE COULD DO WAS TO STARE, FASCINATED, AT THE BRUTAL FIGURE WHO TOOK COOL AND DELIBERATE AIM AT HIM.





The Brave And The Damned

THERE WAS NO SIGN OF MITSUMO WHEN SUMMERS AND ANOTHER OFFICER BURST INTO THE HOTEL. BUT THEY SAW SNAITH . . .

THE JAPS ARE ROUTED, GENERAL. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CAPTURE THE LEADER, MITSUMO.

WAIT—
THE GENERAL'S
DEAD—STONE
DEAD!

THEY MOVED THE FALLEN CHAIR, AND SNAITH'S BODY SLITHERED TO THE FLOOR.

THERE'S
NO MARK ON HIM,
COLONEL SUMMERS—
NOTHING TO SHOW
HOW HE DIED.

SNAITH'S MEN SAID
THAT ONLY THE DEVIL
HAD THE POWER TO
SCARE HIM— AND
I'LL SWEAR SNAITH
DIED OF FRIGHT...

The Brave And The Damned

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THE BRIGADE HAD THE JAPANESE RISING UNDER CONTROL BEFORE NIGHT FELL. BUT THEY SEARCHED THE ISLAND FOR A WEEK WITHOUT FINDING MITSUMO.

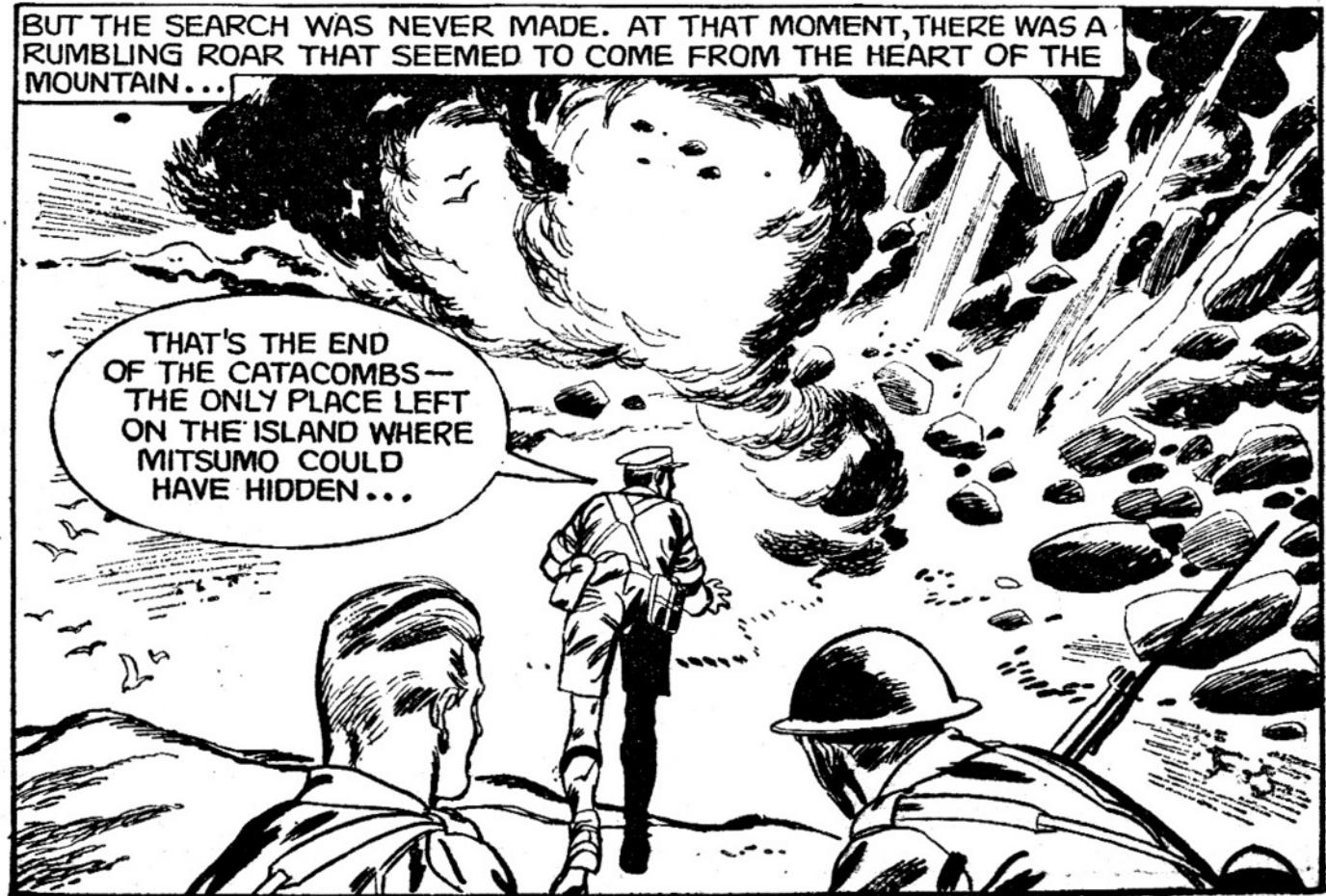
THE NATIVES SAY MITSUMO WAS SEEN GOING BACK INTO THE CAVES WITH A FEW OF HIS MEN.

ALL RIGHT, WE'LL SEARCH THE CATACOMBS...



BUT THE SEARCH WAS NEVER MADE. AT THAT MOMENT, THERE WAS A RUMBLING ROAR THAT SEEMED TO COME FROM THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN...

THAT'S THE END OF THE CATACOMBS — THE ONLY PLACE LEFT ON THE ISLAND WHERE MITSUMO COULD HAVE HIDDEN...



WHERE THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVES HAD BEEN,
THERE WAS NOW A SOLID MASS OF ROCKS,
SEALING THE CATACOMBS FOR EVER.



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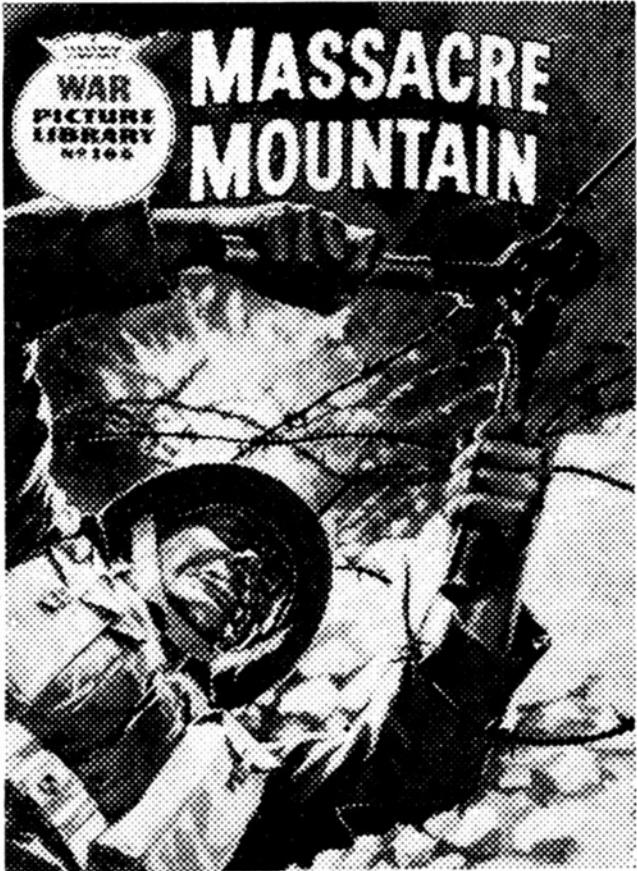
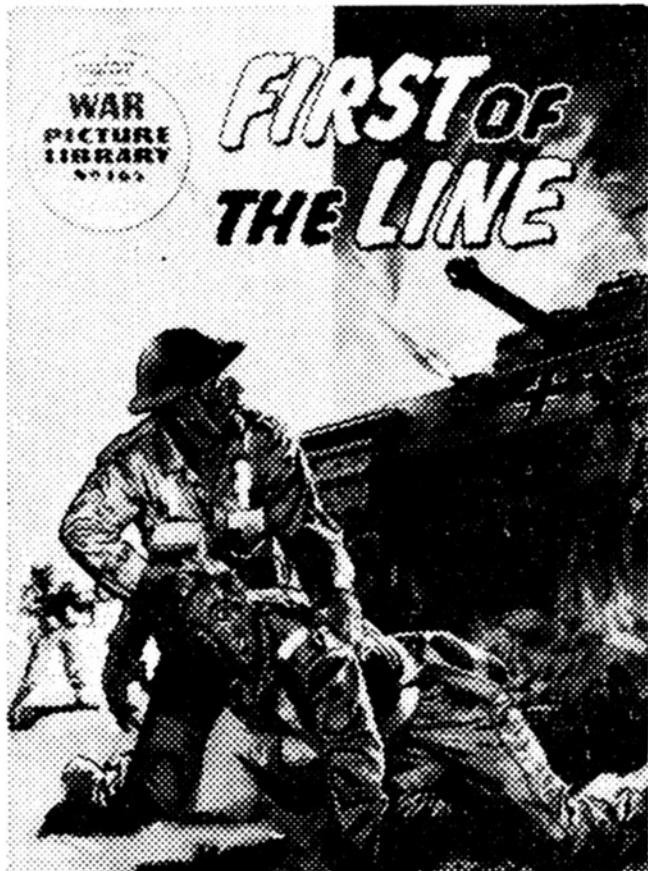
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